

Report of Principal Defendants Concerning Status of Access to Archive/Records Offices

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National Archives, July 16, 2021 Press Release

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National Archives Announces Limited Reopening of Research Rooms

Press Release ·
Friday, July 16, 2021

Washington, DC

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) is starting to resume research room operations. Several locations have already begun pilots to test research room policies and procedures that promote social distancing, while otherwise allowing us to serve records in a secure manner, and starting Monday, August 2, most National Archives research rooms will reopen for research on a limited basis.

NARA services will look very different from the services provided prior to COVID-19. Research visits will be by appointment only and will require a virtual consultation prior to the onsite visit. Boxes of records will be pulled in advance and will be waiting at an assigned table. Research appointments will initially be for 4-5 hours total, depending on the location. In addition, we have implemented a number of measures to ensure the safety of our researchers and staff:

- Requiring that unvaccinated visitors wear face coverings during their visit.
- Limiting the number of people in each research room.
- Requiring that those who are sick or do not feel well stay home.
- Implementing safe social distancing through stanchions, physical barriers, floor markings, one-way paths, and directional guidance. Chairs will be removed and workspaces will be blocked to promote physical distancing between researchers.
- Following CDC cleaning guidance. In addition, researchers will contribute to sanitizing procedures by cleaning their assigned tables and equipment before and after their research.
- Researchers should wash their hands thoroughly before entering and after exiting research rooms and regularly throughout their visit to the facility. Hand sanitizer will be readily available outside of the research rooms.
- Records quarantine: All record material accessed by a researcher will be quarantined after use for three full days, and the records will not be available to other researchers during the quarantine period.
- Contact tracing: If a researcher or NARA employee experiences COVID-19 symptoms while in a NARA research room or later reports symptoms, a diagnosis, or a close contact with a person who tested positive for COVID-19, NARA will use contact information collected during the researcher registration process to notify other researchers of a potential exposure.

Please email the relevant facility using the contact information on their facility page to request an appointment. Researchers should check the specific facility page for details and updates, as the situation can change quickly.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we work to reopen our facilities in a careful and deliberate manner that prioritizes the safety of staff and the public. We look forward to welcoming you back to our research facilities.

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For press information contact the National Archives Public and Media Communications Staff at 202-357-5300.

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